

EDITORIAL

Publication time

One of the commonest questions I am asked is how long it takes to have a paper published in the *Journal of Structural Geology*. It is impossible to answer exactly, but I am able to give some indication of the times taken in the various stages from submission to final publication. The principal stages are in review, in revision, in editing and in press.

The "in review" stage is one of the 'unknowns': review times can vary from about 2 months, in ideal cases, to considerably longer where referees have been uncooperative or manuscripts delayed in the post. The Editors commonly find themselves in the position of being let down by a reviewer at a late stage, and having to delay further to find a new reviewer. Authors will appreciate that reviewing of manuscripts depends on the goodwill of many individuals. I hope to improve the review times during 1988, by some changes in procedure.

The time "in press" can be a second stage of frustration for authors. This is the production time from receipt by the publisher to actual publication. Such times are keenly compared between journals, and may even be a factor in deciding to submit to a particular journal. The time "in press" is closely linked to the queue of papers in press. Readers of my 1986 Editorials (Vol. 8 No. 1 and Vol. 8 No. 8) will be aware of the measures introduced to reduce the queue in press. During 1987, the queue disappeared and production times were reduced by up to 2-3 months. The average times in press for Volume 9 were 5½-6½ months, the lowest since 1983 and a tribute to the efficiency of the production staff at Pergamon.

References and citations

References to other publications, theses, reports and maps are an important part of any scientific paper. The compilation of a reference list requires careful selection procedures, to ensure that no important source works are omitted, and yet to avoid unnecessarily long lists. Two common problems seem to arise in this Journal. The first is where vital source material such as previous papers, geological survey sheets or survey memoirs are omitted. Readers would wrongly assume that there was no important source material, and that the work was all new. The second case is the opposite extreme where a paper is packed with strings of references in parentheses. Excessive citations without explanatory text make difficult reading, and the sense of the paper is easily lost. There are some topics and some review sections of papers which clearly do require large numbers of references. For these, it is important to give the context of citations: for example, a particular reference may be a useful source for other references, another may be listed because it gives an alternative interpretation.

Authors are reminded of the responsibility to research their subject fully, before writing papers. They have an obligation to refer to former work, to allied work and to papers which provide additional data or arguments. References and citations are an integral part of a good scientific paper.

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